

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 CAIRO 13305 01 OF 02 210819Z
ACTION NEA-11

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSM-03 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15
ICA-11 HA-05 /073 W
-----071702 210822Z /11/10

R 191732Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9374
INFO AMCONSUL ALEXANDRIA
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
USMISSION SINAI
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 CAIRO 13305

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (TEXT CORRECTED)

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT EG
SUBJECT: MAY 21 REFERENDUM

REF: (A) CAIRO 12907, (B) CAIRO 12917, (C) CAIRO 13221,
(D) CAIRO 13105, (E) CAIRO 13914

SUMMARY. WIDESPREAD UNCERTAINTY HERE OVER WHY SADAT
MOVING FORCEFULLY AGAINST OPPOSITION WITH MAY 21 REFEREN-
DUM AS WELL AS HOW HE WILL USE NEW POWERS. REFERENDUM,
WHOSE PASSAGE CERTAINTY, WILL GIVE "SOCIALIST PUBLIC
PROSECUTOR" AUTHORITY TO INVESTIGATE INTER ALIA ATHEISTS,
PRE-52 LEADERS, AND WRITERS. PROSECUTOR WILL THEN SUB-
MIT CASE TO PEOPLES ASSEMBLY WHICH CAN APPROVE, AMEND
OR REJECT HIS DECISION. UNLESS OPPOSITION PROVOKES
SADAT BY OVERT ACTS OF DEFIANCE, NEW POWERS LIKELY BE
APPLIED IN LIMITED WAY AS WAS "LAW AND ORDER" REFERENDUM
OF FEBRUARY 10, 1977. LEFTISTS AND WAFD PLAN TO CHALLENGE
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 CAIRO 13305 01 OF 02 210819Z

CONSTITUTIONALITY OF REFERENDUM, BUT MAY CONCURRENTLY
ATTEMPT TO FORGE COMMON FRONT IN NAME OF DEMOCRACY AND
HOLD PUBLIC MEETINGS. SHOULD THIS HAPPEN IN VOLATILE
ATMOSPHERE OF CAIRO, VIOLENCE COULD ERUPT (OR BE PRO-
VOKED) WITH SERIOUS CONSEQUENCES. END SUMMARY.

1. CONSTERNATION. THERE IS WIDESPREAD UNCERTAINTY,

EVEN AMONG SADAT'S SUPPORTERS, OVER WHY HE MOVING SO FORCEFULLY AGAINST HIS CRITICS AT THIS TIME. WE KNOW SADAT NOW FULLY AWARE OF WIDESPREAD PUBLIC DISCONTENT OVER ECONOMIC CONDITIONS (WHICH IS MORE SHARPLY FOCUSED BECAUSE OF STALLED PEACE PROCESS) AND THAT GOE CONCERNED ABOUT REPETITION OF JANUARY 1977 RIOTS. IT IS AGAINST THIS BACKGROUND THAT SADAT SEES HIS OPPONENTS OPPORTUNISTICALLY FANNING THE DISCONTENT FOR THEIR OWN PURPOSES. ADDITIONALLY, HE CONSIDERS PUBLIC CRITICISM OF HIMSELF, HIS FAMILY AND SOME OF HIS CLOSEST CONFIDANTS UNJUST AND TOTALLY UNACCEPTABLE. THERE MAY BE OTHER REASONS AS WELL, BUT THERE IS NO MORE AGREEMENT ON WHY SADAT MOVED THAN ON HOW HE WILL APPLY NEW POWERS. SADAT'S MAJOR TARGETS IN MAY 21 REFERENDUM ARE CLEARLY (A) LEFTISTS, WHO HAVE BEEN MOST VOCAL CRITICS AND WHOM HE SEES AS PART OF LARGER SOVIET-DIRECTED CONSPIRACY AGAINST HIM; AND (B) WAFDIST LEADER SARRAGEDIN, WHO CHALLENGING HIS PREEMINENCE AND LEGITIMACY.

2. HOW FAR COULD SADAT GO? AS REPORTED REF A, REFERENDUM EMPOWERS GOE TO ELIMINATE FROM PUBLIC SECTOR EMPLOYMENT AND POLITICAL ACTIVITY ATHEISTS (COMMUNISTS), PRE-1952 POLITICAL LEADERS (WAFD), PARTICIPANTS IN POST-1970 "CENTERS OF POWERS" (ALY SABRI, ET AL), AND ANYONE PROVED TO HAVE "CORRUPTED POLITICAL LIFE OR ENDANGERED NATIONAL UNITY OR SOCIAL PEACE" (JOURNALISTS AND POSSIBLY CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 CAIRO 13305 01 OF 02 210819Z

IKHWAN).

3. THERE IS CONSIDERABLE CONFUSION OVER MECHANICS OF HOW NEW POWERS WILL BE APPLIED (E.G. ASU FIRST SECRETARY MUSTAFA KHALIL TOLD BRITISH AMBASSADOR TWO DAYS AGO HE HAD NOT BEEN CONSULTED ON REFERENDUM AND DOESN'T KNOW HIMSELF). REFERENDUM GIVES PEOPLES ASSEMBLY AUTHORITY TO PASS IMPLEMENTING LEGISLATION AND "SOCIALIST PUBLIC PROSECUTOR" AUTHORITY TO INVESTIGATE AND FILE SUITS ON ALL VIOLATIONS. ASSEMBLY IS EXPECTED TO MEET MAY 27 TO BEGIN DRAFTING LEGISLATION. AFTER INVESTIGATION THE PROSECUTOR WILL PRESUMABLY SUBMIT EACH CASE TO PEOPLES ASSEMBLY, WHICH CAN AMEND, REJECT OR APPROVE DECISION OF PROSECUTOR BY MAJORITY VOTE. MAJOR CRITICISMS OF LEFTISTS ARE THAT AUTHORITY OF SOCIALIST PUBLIC PROSECUTOR HAS NEVER BEEN DEFINED AND THAT ASSEMBLY ASSUMING ROLE OF JUDICIARY (REF B). REFERENDUM IS DIRECTED ONLY AT INDIVIDUALS AND, IF ACTIONS ARE TO BE TAKEN AGAINST PARTIES, IT WILL FALL TO ASU CENTRAL COMMITTEE UNDER POLITICAL PARTIES LAW OF JUNE 1977 (REF B). IN SHORT, GOE WILL SOON HAVE POWERS TO LAUNCH ACROSS THE BOARD HOUSE CLEANING OF ITS CRITICS IN PARTIES, PRESS

AND PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS.

4. HOW FAR WILL SADAT GO? UNLESS LEFTISTS AND WAFD PROVOKE SADAT BY MOUNTING PUBLIC DEMONSTRATIONS OR OTHER OVERT ACTS OF DEFIANCE, IT IS OUR VIEW THAT NEW POWERS WILL IN FIRST INSTANCE BE APPLIED IN LIMITED MANNER; E.G. ELIMINATION OF PRE-1952 WAFD LEADERS FROM ACTIVE POLITICAL ROLE; A MUZZLING OF LEFTIST AL AHALI; AND TIGHTER CONTROL OVER PEOPLES ASSEMBLY DEBATES. THE LAWS WOULD, HOWEVER, BE ON THE BOOKS AND SERVE AS A DETERRENT TO OPPOSITION ELEMENTS. THIS VIEW BASED IN PART ON HOW STRINGENT REFERENDUM OF FEBRUARY 10, 1977 APPLIED; I.E. EXCEPT FOR INITIAL ARRESTS OF THOSE INVOLVED IN JANUARY 1977 RIOTS,

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 CAIRO 13305 02 OF 02 201052Z
ACTION NEA-11

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSM-03 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15
ICA-11 HA-05 /073 W
-----059405 201105Z /10

R 191732Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9375
INFO AMCONSUL ALEXANDRIA
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
USMISSION SINAI
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 CAIRO 13305

DECREE SERVED MAINLY AS DETERRENT TO RENEWED ACTS AGAINST PUBLIC ORDER. (WATERED DOWN VERSION OF TAX EVASION TAX LAW, FOR EXAMPLE, PASSED PEOPLES ASSEMBLY 15 MONTHS AFTER LAST REFERENDUM).

5. LIKELIHOOD OF PROVOCATION. LEFTIST AND WAFD LEADERS BOTH INTEND TO DEFY GOE BY CHALLENGING CONSTITUTIONALITY OF REFERENDUM AND ENSUING LAWS AND LEFTISTS HAVE HINTED THEY WISH MAKE COMMON CAUSE WITH WAFD. WAFD, ITSELF, HAS BEEN TAKING MORE CAUTIOUS PUBLIC POSITION. EVENING MEETING MAY 19 SPONSORED BY BAR ASSOCIATION SHOULD PROVIDE GOOD INDICATION OF STRATEGY ALL PLAYERS. ASSOCIATION HAS INVITED LEADERS OF FOUR POLITICAL PARTIES

PLUS EDITOR OF IKHWAN'S AL DAWA TO SEMINAR ON "FUTURE OF DEMOCRACY IN EGYPT". IF ALL OPPOSITION PARTIES ATTEND AND ENCOURAGE THEIR FOLLOWERS TO DO SO AS WELL, PUBLIC DEMONSTRATION OF OPPOSITION TO REFERENDUM COULD RESULT. SHOULD THIS HAPPEN IN VOLATILE ATMOSPHERE OF CAIRO, THERE IS DANGER THAT VIOLENCE COULD ERUPT (OR BE PROVOKED) WITH POLICE. THIS IN TURN COULD INVOLVE URBAN
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 CAIRO 13305 02 OF 02 201052Z

MASSSES, WHO HAVE INNUMERABLE GRIEVANCES TO EXPRESS. SUCH EVENTS COULD BRING ABOUT AN OPPOSITION FRONT OF WAFD, LEFT, AND PERHAPS EVEN IKHWAN IN NAME OF DEMOCRACY . WE BELIEVE GOE FULLY AWARE THAT REFERENDUM COULD SERVE AS CATALYST TO BRING OPPOSITION TOGETHER AND WILL ATTEMPT APPLY NEW RESTRICTIONS SELECTIVELY. SECURITY AUTHORITIES EQUALLY AWARE OF DANGER OF PUBLIC VIOLENCE IN CAIRO. BOTH OF THESE FACTORS MILITATE AGAINST REPEAT OF JANUARY 1977 RIOTS, BUT IF SOME OPPOSITION ELEMENTS DETERMINED TO PROVOKE POLICE, IT MAY BE DIFFICULT FOR COOL HEADS TO PREVAIL.

6. IN CONVERSATION WITH AMBASSADOR MAY 17, SADAT HIMSELF SHED LITTLE ADDITIONAL LIGHT ON EITHER HIS RATIONALE FOR REFERENDUM OR HIS INTENTION IN APPLYING POWER IT AUTHORIZES WHEN SUBJECT AROSE IN PASSING, SADAT SAID ONLY THAT HE HAD NOT CALLED FOR REFERENDUM BECAUSE OF ANY CONCERN OVER INTERNAL SECURITY SITUATION, BUT THAT THERE HAD BEEN ABUSES OF EGYPT'S DEMOCRATIC SYSTEM WHICH HAD TO BE CURBED. HE GAVE IMPRESSION OF NOT BEING UNDULY CONCERNED. MATTHEWS

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: POLITICAL STABILITY, REFERENDUMS, INTELLIGENCE ASSESSMENTS, PUBLIC ATTITUDES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 19 may 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978CAIRO13305
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780219-0347
Format: TEL
From: CAIRO
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780541/aaaabipi.tel
Line Count: 203
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: fc4e8c9a-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 78 CAIRO 12907, 78 CAIRO 13221, 78 CAIRO 13105, 78 CAIRO 13914
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 15 jun 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2642427
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: MAY 21 REFERENDUM
TAGS: PINT, EG
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/fc4e8c9a-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014